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THE
RIVER NIGER.

A PAPER READ

BEFORE THE

Royal Geographical Society,

JUNE 11th, 1877,

BY THE RIGHT REV.

BISHOP CROWTHER.

AND

*A Brief Account of Missionary Operations carried
on under the Superintendence of
Bishop Crowther in the Niger Territory.*

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A PAPER READ BEFORE THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL
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BY THE

RIGHT REV. BISHOP CROWTHER;

IT is now thirty-six years ago since I first visited the River Niger, having in the year 1841 been appointed to join the expedition sent out by the British Government, under the late Captain Trotter. It may be remembered that that expedition followed the spirited, but comparatively unsuccessful, effort of Laird and Oldfield, which in its turn followed on the journey and discovery of the Landers, who, embarking at Bous Sah in an open boat, descended the unknown stream, were taken captive by King Obi, of Aboh, and ransomed by the then King of Brass Town, near the mouth of the chief branch of the Niger Delta.

The disastrous mortality amongst those engaged in the expedition of 1841 is familiar to all acquainted with the annals of West African discovery.

Many years elapsed before any further attempts were made to explore the Niger, and the populous countries through which it flowed were for years shut out from intercourse with the civilised world, owing to the dread of the malaria which infected its banks. In 1854, however, the Government were induced, by the urgent repre-

sentations of the late Macgregor Laird, to attempt another expedition, and one was sent in 1854, under the command of the late Doctor Baikie, to explore the Tshadda Branch, from the confluence of this and the Kwora, which, after staying in the river 118 days, returned without the loss of a man, precautions having been taken to avoid putting into the bunkers green wood, the noxious heated vapour of which was supposed to have been injurious to the health of the members of the expedition of 1841.

I had the honour of accompanying this expedition also, and a very interesting exploration was at that time made of the Tshadda Branch, in the course of which we succeeded in reaching the town of Hamarua, a distance of some 400 miles to the east of the confluence.

The success of that expedition induced the Admiralty to enter into a contract with Mr. Laird to explore the Niger and its tributaries, and in 1857 an expedition was sent out under the command of the late Doctor Baikie, which I again joined, when Lieutenant Glover, now Sir John Glover, drew the chart of the Niger, now in use, but the progress of this expedition was impeded by the wreck of the S. S. "Dayspring" on a rock above Rabba, about 200 miles from the confluence. Since that time I have been, I may say, almost every year able to visit the Niger, sometimes in the expeditions of the Admiralty, and when they ceased, in the various trading steamers which now, to the number of five or six, make the annual ascent of the river. During this time I have had, as may be supposed, many varied opportunities of becoming acquainted with the geographical features, not only of the river Niger itself, but also of the countries which lie adjacent to it on either bank. I have twice marched from the Niger at Rabbah and Bida, to the sea coast at Lagos, and I have endeavoured to gather such information as I could, as to the peoples, their habits, languages, and races, and also as to the chief directions of the trade from and to the interior of the countries which lie to the east of the Quarra, and to the north and south of the Tshadda Branches. The traveller, Dr. Barth, has given so full an account of those to the north of the Tshadda or Binue, that there is no occasion for me to say anything of these, and I am rejoiced to learn that the German traveller, Dr. Nachtigall, has explored the countries which lie between the limits of Dr. Barth's discoveries, and the territory of Darfur. I shall therefore confine my remarks to what I know of the river and its branches, and also of the adjacent countries.

Two very marked divisions at once present themselves in endeavouring to give a description of the Niger and its adjacent countries, and these are the upper and lower Niger, or to speak more correctly, the Delta of the river, and its course through the main land. What the actual extent of the Delta of the Niger is remains at present unknown, whether the Old Calabar river with its affluents form any portion of the Delta is uncertain. But still it is not improbable that there is a communication between the Tshadda and Cross river, explored by the late Mr. Beacroft; at any rate, it is remarkable that the Akpah tribes of Adamawa, seem to have found their way down to Fernando Po by some short cut. But to the west there is no doubt that the vast system of Marsh and Lagoon, which reaches as far as Porto Novo, to the west of Lagos, is more or less connected with the Delta of the river, though they also owe their existence to the smaller streams, which also pour their mud charged waters down from the higher levels of the Yoruba country. Thus, what may be called the Delta of the Niger, is a vast tract of marshy country extending along a coast line of some 120 miles, with a depth to the interior of about 150 miles at the broadest part.

The recent explorations, begun by Sir John Glover, and Captain Goldsworthy, and followed up by the Revs. Messrs. Maser and Roper of the Church Missionary Society, have made us acquainted with the characteristics of the western portion of the Niger Delta, and have showed us that as regards the feature of the land there prevails a monotonous uniformity of intricate canal and marsh, villages hidden in the dense growth of reeds, the people partaking of all the characteristics of the dwellers in African swamps, and all, as far as it was possible to ascertain, speaking, even up to Benin, with slight modification, the Yoruba language, the same as is spoken at Badagry, Abbeokuta, Ilorin, and Ibadan.

One interesting fact these explorers record, that far up in the district of Oke Ondo they heard the women in the songs which accompanied their work, chanting the praise of one who was always a true friend, in every sense, of the African, and the burden of their song was "Gollibar, Gollibar," meaning thereby the late governor of Lagos, Sir John Glover.

The character of the central portions of the Delta, as it presents itself to the eye on approaching, is so well described by Captain Allen, that I venture to quote his words here:—

“The Rio Nun, the chief entrance, from its size, has the appearance of an estuary, being more than a mile and a half wide and five miles in length; the other outlets resemble this. The water is deep in every part of it. The rise and fall at spring-tides is 5ft. 6in., and at neaps 4ft. 8in. The ebb-tide sets out with a velocity of three miles and three-quarters or four miles in the middle of the river.

“The opposite sides of the river appear to be of different formation. Cape Nun, the termination of the right bank, has a long spit of sand running into the sea about one mile and a half. The shore of the right bank is generally swampy, formed by a deposit of mud, brought down by the river, the outside of which presents a sandy appearance; and is intersected by innumerable channels of water, of a brackish and putrid taste. Where dry spots are found, they are cultivated by the natives from the other side. The bed of the river is covered with a blue clay, rich in vegetable matter, and coloured by oxide of iron, similar to the clay observed in the bed of the sea outside the bar. Whenever the clay was broken by the rapidity of the current, the pieces were immediately carried off by the moving water; and it often happened that the spring tides washed them ashore, in the shape of cylinders. These being left behind by the retreating ocean, formed one of the peculiar characters of the right bank of the river.

“In the swampy parts of the right bank, the mangrove abounds with its peculiar fructification. The numerous arching roots of this tree are favourable for the deposition of sand and mud.

“In the woods on this bank, the water was upwards of two feet deep in most parts, and the air close and confined. The greater portion of the underwood was mangrove.

“The left bank of the river consists of sand, intermingled with clay of a dirty yellow colour—less intersected by channels—in which abundance of fresh and salt-water shells are found.

“This bank was firm, two feet above the high-water mark, and consequently capable of cultivation. The plantations were chiefly of plantains. Trees were found here more than one hundred feet high, while palms of sixty or eighty feet in height expanded their majestic leaves.

“Passing through a narrow channel, it expands to a wide sheet of water, with many islets, and several broad and promising channels on the right and left. Nothing at this part was to be seen indicative of anything like *terra-firma*. The visible boundaries of the river in

all these branches being an endless confusion of the arching roots of the mangrove, the only occupant of this swamp. At low water, their roots are covered by slimy and stinking mud, with decayed vegetable matter; to which may, not unreasonably, be attributed the deadly character of the locality.

“The Nun branch, soon after leaving Louis Creek, was scarcely one hundred and twenty yards wide, but on advancing, we passed several divergents, and the width and depth increased proportionally, as well as the strength of the current.

“The banks began gradually to assume the appearance of firmer land; at first without any vestiges of the operations of man; but soon some small cultivated patches were seen; bearing plantains, a few fishing stakes and a small fishing hut, &c. The universal stillness of the scene was very imposing; unbroken as it was by any sound, save the dashing of our own paddle-wheels, and the clear musical cry of the leadsman, which aided the effect, falling on the ear in measured cadence. The large and umbrageous trees, with their festoons of *Orchideæ* and purple and white *Convolvuli* hanging from the branches, formed a combination of forest scenery, so striking, novel, and interesting, as enabled us to forget that the much talked-of Delta of the Niger had been fairly entered upon. The reeds gave place more frequently to patches of cultivation, in the midst of which were small granaries, raised from the ground on poles, to secure the stored productions of the soil from the overflowing of the river, as well as other more cunning depredators, as the proprietor lives in a distant village. Sunday Island—twenty miles from the sea—is the highest point to which the sea-tide reaches in the dry season, clearly indicated by the gradual but rapid disappearance of the mangrove trees.

“Ferns, the *Ficus*, *Mimosæ*, and various shrubs and bushes of small growth increase above Sunday Island; and the banks, which previously were swampy, become somewhat firm; and the eye—wearied by the melancholy and monotonous hue of the mangrove—is delighted to witness the rapidly increasing vegetation, which soon assumes all the dignity of the tropical forest.

“A few fishing-stakes and some small patches of plantains give the earliest indications of approach to the habitations of man. The first villages are composed of a very few mud huts, of a square or oblong form, with thatched roofs and gable ends.

“At about 65 and 75 miles from the mouth of the main stream

there are two important branch outlets, the first flowing to the west, called the Wari branch, finding its way into the western portion of the Delta; and it is believed that the Niger might be reached by means of this branch, from the Lagoons at Lagos. The second outlet leaves the Niger at Ndoni, and from what I have heard at Bonny, I have good reason to believe, it communicates with the outlets called the Bonny and New Calabar Rivers. Both these important outlets are closed by the jealousy of the tribes on the river.

“With respect to these various outlets from the upper countries, into the Lagoons, though through the jealousy of the native chiefs on the coast they have been closed up against navigation, yet, I firmly believe that if the advantages to themselves of their opening for general uses were properly pointed out and explained by proper authorities, *the chiefs would not insist upon their exclusive use.* I believe that the fault is not in the native chiefs alone, but in that of civilized interested influence also, which has encouraged them in their being closed up against competing opponents in trade on the coast. This should not be permitted to continue by such a Society as this, whose endeavours are, not to convey civilization and commerce by present openings only, but also by a contemplated giving an outlet to the sea to fill up the depression of the land in the neighbourhood of Timbuctoo, for easier access into the interior for extensive commerce; and not only that, but also to construct a railway across from east to west to attain the same end. While contemplating these grand schemes for the future of Africa as a producing continent, it will very much further the objects if, in the meantime, openings made by nature were utilized, if all the outlets to the sea on the west coast, from the Volta to Old Calabar, were explored and thrown open for general navigation as water transits as far as they are navigable into the interior countries, such water transits would greatly facilitate communications with the interior countries from what point one may wish to ascend, whether from the Volta, the Benin, the Bonny, or the Old Calabar, into the interior countries, as the Niger is now available already about 600 miles inland from the mouth of the Nun. Having attained the uppermost navigable limits of these outlets, through which railway apparatuses might be conveyed with ease, the inland roads might be advantageously commenced to be constructed east or south-eastward, as may be desired. The chiefs of the interior, the producing countries, are very desirous of such openings through their countries. The chief of

Ibo in the Yoruba country had earnestly begged me to represent the necessity of opening the Oshon stream, which runs close to his capital, and empties itself into the Lagoon below Lagos, for commercial purposes ; what a vast amount of wealth such streams might be conveying down from year to year, but which at present is shut up for want of water conveyance, or railroads.

The Warree Branch was called the Benin by Lander, because by it the town of Benin may be reached. This branch has been explored recently by the steamers of the West African Company which reached the river.

It is also supposed that from the Ndoni Branch there is a connection with the river Jumna, or the old Calabar or Cross River, explored by Beacroft in 1841.

Up to these points the Niger flows between low clay banks ; the whole country around is flat and swampy. Here, however, at some little distance from the stream, gently rising hills are seen on either side, indicating that we have passed the Delta proper, and are now entering on the main stream of the river. The character of the river here changes ; instead of the numerous and rapid windings of the lower reaches, its course is nearly straight, and the breadth is about a mile and a half. At this point, also, a change in the character of the people takes place. On the eastern side of the main stream they are almost from the mouth of the Ibo or Idzo, tribes entirely pagan, with various forms of idol and fetish worship, two marked features being the idea of sacrifice, ordinary victims being domestic animals, and on special occasions single human beings, but with no such indiscriminate slaughter as at Dahomey or in Ashanti. The town of Adda-Mugu is the point also where a new territory—that of Igara—begins. This was the town of that Abokko who was so friendly to the traveller Lander ; and his sons, or kinsmen, are chiefs of the country up as far as the confluence. One of these sons, with whom I had been on friendly terms for some time, took advantage of an attempt I made to ascend the river in a small boat, to make me a prisoner in 1868. I was rescued by Vice-Consul Fell, but in the scuffle he was struck by a poisoned arrow, and died.

At Adda-Mugu, also, the character of the dwellings changes. Here, for the first time, are seen the circular conical roofed huts, which prevail in the interior, the dwellings up to this point are the usual square or oblong low huts.

About forty miles above Adda-Mugu is the town of Iddah. This

town I first visited in 1841, and have subsequently visited it on several occasions. The river here flows through a low chain of hills formed of red sandstone, and the cliffs of this material on either side of the river are an entirely new feature in the river scenery. They rise to the height of 185 feet, on the summit are the conical huts of part of the town of Iddah. From the summit a splendid view is obtained ; to the North and South the river is seen extending for many miles, while on the Western there is seen an undulating country, bounded on the far west by the mountains of the Yoruba country. The town of Iddah, the largest and most important in the kingdom of Igara, is built on the summit of the cliff on the East bank of the river. There are about 2,000 huts, and about 8,000 inhabitants. Nearly all the dwellings are the usual circular huts, the walls rise about six feet and are built of clay and stone, the roof is conical and thatched with palm leaves. It is generally supported in the centre by a pole or wooden pillar. The eaves of the roof form a low verandah. When there is a door, it is carved in an elaborate manner, with a rude sketch of an alligator or some other animal ; the fastening is a bolt and a rough padlock, these are, however, seldom required. The furniture and utensils are few, and generally lying about the court, such as large earthenware jars for water. The cooking apparatus are small calabashes and earthen pots of various form.

“The huts of the higher persons, as Mallams, chiefs, or judges, are painted blue or white outside, and have occasionally a small space in front paved with pieces of granite, or even shells. The sleeping-places are simply raised banks of clay, having mats and some dry grass spread over them ; the low wooden-seats sometimes met with were articles of particular luxury. Everything inside the building is kept remarkably clean and dry.

“The streets are very irregular and numerous ; the principal market is held on a clear level space, shaded by numerous trees. It is arranged according to the directions of the chiefs, all articles being properly classed and exposed for sale on the ground, or on mats. There was a great variety of vegetables, yams, ground-nuts, palm-nuts, cassada, kola-nuts, plantains, Indian corn, Sugar cane, cocoa nuts, rice, shea butter, calabash pumpkins ; various native manufactures of cotton, for tobies and body clothes ; red and blue cotton and grass threads, raw cotton of very short staple ; native made swords, knives, spears, and little calabashes of dye

powders, *tephrosia*, *oxides* of iron and camwood, as also brass and ivory ornaments for the body, and pipes of clay, or iron, very neatly made.

“The most common manufacture is that of cotton cloths, practised by a great number of females. In spinning, the primitive distaff is used, such as is usually seen in Italy, or in some of our own mountain districts, where the spinning wheel is not always obtainable. The thread is rough and uneven, but when carefully woven into *narrow* stripes by a rude machine—very like the earliest of our hand-loom—it forms a strong and durable cloth, much dearer than the English cottons brought there, and, of course, only within reach of wealthy people.

“The Government of the Eggarah county is monarchical, and vested in the Attah, or King of Iddah, the succession is hereditary in the female line, the eldest son of the sister taking precedence of the many children of the former King. Under certain circumstances, which we could not ascertain, the sovereign has the right of nominating a successor.

“The whole of the religious power is confided to the Mallams or priests, who are all unlettered Mahomedans, but who have had the advantage of travelling in other parts of Africa, where, in addition to a few sentences of the Koran, and an imperfect knowledge of the great Prophet’s doctrines, they have picked up a good idea of business, which they combine with the duties of their office.

“They also monopolize the medical branch, in which they are as ignorant as their more sacred one. Another of their most lucrative sources is the sale of amulets, or charms against the visitation of sickness and the agency of evil spirits; they are made up of any written paper which may come in their way, and usually enclosed in neatly plaited strips of leather to be suspended from the neck.

“The greater proportion of the Iddah people are Pagans, though with a confused impression of Mahomedanism, which obtains more among the richer persons, who can afford to pay the Mallams for such limited instruction as they can convey orally. No public idols are allowed, yet most of them have little amulets, which hold much the same place in their estimation as the wooden Fetiches of the Ibous and other tribes.”

After leaving Iddah, the river continues to flow between sandstone cliffs and sloping banks, behind which are table-lands and gently rising hills. In about forty miles another region seems to be reached.

Large rocks of quartz are seen, and the mountains on the Eastern side are steep and conical. Down their sides are deep ravines which, in the rainy season, are mountain torrents. Continuing to the North the mountains close in upon the river, until at last the confluence is reached, the junction of the two rivers, Quorra and Binue.

When I made the ascent of the river in 1854 with Dr. Baikie, we together ascended the hill, called Mount Patteh, opposite the confluence. I cannot do better than use Dr. Baikie's words to describe the scene we saw. "From an elevation of 400 feet we saw immediately beneath us the pretty green topped Mount Stirling; on our left was a deep ravine separating us from another flat crowned hill; on our right lay the land purchased in 1841 for the model farm, bounded to the southward by steep and rugged mountains.

"Flowing from our left, and meandering round the base of the chain of hills on which we stood, came the narrow Quorra, while full before us came journeying from the eastward the broad straight-coursed Binue, the mingling waters of the two mighty streams forming the lake-like confluence, its surface dotted with islets and banks, or rippled by contending currents, while in the distance on the right the united rivers rushed impetuously to the sea through the deep defile by which we had ascended.

"Along the banks numerous villages could be discerned. Far as the eye could reach, for miles and miles, the ground teemed with the exuberant vegetation. Such a fruitful soil in other climes, and with a happier population, would yield support and employment to thousands, and long ere this have proved the source of untold wealth. The peninsula formed by the junction of the two rivers is a miniature Delta, low, swampy, and intersected by numerous streamlets. The natives fancy there is a difference in the colour of the two streams, and call the Quorra the white water, while the Binue is known as the black water."

The furthest point to which I have been upon the Quorra branch is the town of Rabbuh. Along the western shores of the river there extend ranges of hills which are, in reality, the fringe of the high table-land which stretches towards the Yoruba country, while similar hills are on the Northern and Eastern banks of the Quorra branch.

The countries and tribes from Iddah to this point are Igara, Igbira, Kakanda, and Nupe.

One remarkable characteristic of the Niger river is the varying

character of its channel, caused, no doubt, by the remarkable rise and fall of its waters from the tropical rains. One result of this is that it is almost impossible to navigate the river except at flood time, unless in vessels specially adapted with a very light draught of water. There are parts where sand-banks so obstruct the channel, that not more than four or five feet of water is found during the dry season, and on this account it is most important that attention should be directed to the establishment of a route by land from Lagos to the confluence. This is an existing and long-established route, and I have myself twice traversed it. The last time was in the year 1871, when it was found impossible to return in the steamer, the river having fallen so rapidly as to render the attempt hopeless.

In the year 1871, both the vessels on which I depended for return to the coast were stranded in the river, and I had to arrange for a return to Lagos by land: therefore, preparations were made for a journey to Bida from Lokoja, by the hilly country, till we got to Gori, on the river-side above Muye. About 8 a.m. on the 6th of November, we started for the journey, some on horseback, others on foot, because horses could not be got for all; we travelled about three miles along the river.

After going up and down two or three abrupt small hills and valleys, we came to the foot of the great mountain, Pati Aba, where there was a spring of water; here all rested and took refreshments, preparatory to the great ascent; this done we betook ourselves to climb. About an hour's climbing, all got to the top of the mountain, where there was water in hollows of rocks. Though to us the ascent seemed formidable, yet the carriers, both male and female, with loads of from 56 to 60 lbs. on their heads, ascended it patiently with their burdens; it was a hard labour for them, though they had been accustomed to travel on it, there was no other way to get to these hilly countries.

We had the satisfaction to think that the inhabitants of Lokoja, being regarded as the king's warriors, were paid for carrying our loads over this great mountain, and were not compelled to do it gratuitously to serve the king.

All our party having got to the top of the mountain, we rested awhile; then we travelled on the level rocky plateau for the rest of the day, till we arrived at the town of Agbaja, fortified with walls, and situated at the edge of a deep valley, in shape like an oval dish-cover, and well cultivated; native plants of every description were growing in it; besides which, it was adorned with a forest of stately

palm trees, and other trees of full, green foliage, resembling a gentleman's plantations in this country. A spring of water issued out of the mountain. Other similar valleys were passed. The plateau is sandstone, covered with shallow earth, from about six inches to two feet deep, for miles. In many parts the rock is quite bare. In consequence of the stony character of this part of the mountain, and scarcity of water, except in the valleys, it is very thinly inhabited; besides this, the country being in possession of King Masaba, to whom it is tributary, his soldiers are very oppressive; many are therefore glad to get out of their way to other parts of the country to escape frequent exactions. The inhabitants are poor and miserable.

As we were perfect strangers in this part of the country, and having no control over circumstances, we had to follow the carriers, who, according to custom, carried our loads free of expense, because we were the king's strangers, till we came to the next town, called Ikushemi, about mid-day, where the carriers left the loads to their neighbours to carry in their turn, and returned to Agbaja. We travelled on a parallel line with the river on the plateau for about eight miles, when we descended the mountain on the north-east side, and travelled about four miles on the lowland plain of Ikushemi: total about twelve miles. Our way now lay north-east towards the river, in very bad, swampy grass-fields. In some places we had to dismount and cross the swamps and streams on foot to the middle, because not safe riding.

We crossed the river at Gori in canoes, and reached Bida on the 27th November. We had interviews with King Masaba about our journey to Lagos. He stated that there had been threatening messages exchanged between him and the king of Ilorin, on account of opening the way to the coast, through the Yoruba country, which they had intended to block up against traders from the Niger countries; but that since their tone had been much softened down, and their policy changed. He wanted nothing but an open intercourse between this and the coast. He hoped that we saw fully the reason of the caution he was using for our safety; that the Queen has delivered her subjects doing business on the Niger to his protection, and it would be a great neglect in him not to take every precaution to make the way good before we leave for the coast; so a messenger was despatched to inform them at Ilorin that we should be passing through their town to the coast. He was to return back with answer in the course of fourteen days. As we could not push

our departure faster than the King could arrange, we thought it better to leave the whole arrangements with him ; this being the Ramadan fast month, one could not push business very rapidly at this season.

The festival being over, the King also having received all the information he wanted, to-day he called and presented each of us with a horse for the journey, seven to the members of the S.S. "Victoria," and five to those of the "Rio Formoso," twelve in number, assigning this as his reason for doing so, because Saraonia (the Queen) has been showing him special kindness since the last nine years, and he had not been able to make any suitable returns ; now this was an opportunity for showing his appreciation of the Queen's kindness to him.

From Bida we travelled along the eastern bank of the river, passing through a hilly country, until we reached the ferry at Shonga. This is the present starting-point from the Kowara for Ilorin and the Yoruba country ; since the revolution in Nupe some six years ago, which gave King Masaba much trouble to subdue, the ferry by way Rabba has been stopped to caravans ; all must now cross from Poto by way of Lafaji or Shonga, nearer the eye of King Masaba.

From Shonga we marched to Saregi. At the gate of Saregi we came to the point of the road from Rabba, the way by which I came from Rabba in 1859. Shonga is about twenty miles below Rabba ; travellers starting from either of the lower points of the two angles, Rabba or Shonga, will meet at the upper sharp point of the triangle at the gate of Saregi town, which is the highway from the Niger to the Yoruba country.

From Saregi we marched to Ilorin, which is a large and important town of about 120,000 inhabitants.

The population are a mixture of Fulahs, Yorubas, Hausas, and Nupes.

The route from this to the coast lies through the towns of Ogbomosto, Ozo, Ibadan, and Abeokuta to Lagos. In the neighbourhood of Ilorin, Ogbomosto, and Ozo, the country is very undulating, covered in some parts with thick grass, in others with close, dense forests of a low spreading tree, with a bark like that of the Cork Tree. A remarkable feature of the country is the frequent appearance of high abrupt masses of granite rock, sometimes with precipitous sides.

They seem to shoot up from the plain as if forced through from

below, and yet without disturbing the level of the surrounding country. As Abeokuta is neared, the country becomes flatter. The rocks at Abeokuta are also granite, and the prevailing character of the soil is a rich loam, with gravel in some parts. From Abeokuta to Lagos the land is almost level; at one place there are some slight hills.

I now propose to return to the Binue or Tshadda branch, which I explored in company with Dr. Baikie in 1854. We found the river, after leaving the confluence, of a considerable breadth, but the channel very tortuous. Here, as also lower down the river, a fresh strong breeze, which always, except during squalls, blows up the river. The scenery daily increased in beauty as we advanced up the stream, until at a point about 70 miles above the confluence, the river presents a noble appearance, far exceeding in breadth any part we had yet seen. The banks are clothed with tall palms and other graceful trees, numerous green islands diversifying the scene, and green hills stand out against the dark mountains in the background. Our vessel drew seven feet of water, and the numerous shoals and sand-banks rendered navigation very difficult.

Having noticed several streams running from the southern interior of the Niger, and falling into the Lagoon on the coast, I may also notice several streams from the northern interior of the Niger which are tributary to it, such as the Kaduna, partially explored in 1857 by Lieutenant, now Capt. Sir John Glover, 13 miles from its confluence with the Kwora. Capt. East had also ascended this stream in Her Majesty's Gun-boat, the Pioneer, a few years ago. Its navigable limit north-ward has not yet been ascertained. This stream which runs to the Niger, west of the capital of Nupe, brings one about 10 or 12 miles close to it, which is about 32 miles in a straight line from the north bank of the Kwora. Another stream which runs from the north 8 miles close to Bida, and is tributary to the Kwora, is called Tsantsagga. By this stream, mercantile houses trading at Egga, convey merchandize into the capital by suitable steam launches, which answer remarkable well. The navigable limit of Tsantsagga, like the Kaduna north-ward, is not yet ascertained. The same is applicable to the Tshadda branch of the Niger and its tributary stream Faro, both running west-ward from far eastern countries. Their navigable limits have not yet been ascertained. These streams will open both to science and commerce far more extensive fields of knowledge and wealth than they can imagine.

The fiscal appearance of the country from the upper parts of the

Delta may be briefly described. It is generally undulating ; now and then masses of granite rocky hills shew themselves, and then a dry well drained slope and level lands stretch along. The soil composed of loose red sandstone gravels. Now and then quartz is met with, and the bed of the ground is red clay. Further inland, through which the rivers run, they are hemmed in by high lands or table mountains from 400 to 600 feet in height, to a considerable distance, which in some places confine the river to a narrow passage of about 440 yards wide, with strong current, rocky beds, which is a good test to the power of a river steamer ascending. In many places the lands rise in gentle slopes ; for instance, as at Onitsha, the Confluence, Idda, Kipo Hill Slope on the Kwora, and countries of Hamarua and Adamawa on the Tshadda Branch. Such lands are walked up with easy ascent to a distance of two or three miles, when on looking towards the the river it stretches below like a white belt between the slopes.

What is wanting to bring out the beauty of the scenery is the hand of civilization to lay out the land in regular towns and villages, and Christianity to adorn them with churches with towering spires as crowns of Christian civilization.

This then is the appearance of the country of the interior, as far as I have been, which from imperfect knowledge has been regarded as barren sandy desert, or low swampy regions, uninhabited by human beings ; but the reverse is the case.

The next subject I may touch upon is cattle. Horses, mules, donkeys, and bullocks, are plentiful, which can be used at once as beasts of burden for carts and waggons when roads are made. Even now, without a regularly made road, Hausa merchants from the north and east countries use these animals as beasts of burden to fetch ivory and other merchandize to the south and west, to Egga market from the interior.

When the S. S. "Dayspring" was wrecked on a rock above Rabba in 1857, and I had to encamp near that town for 12 months, one caravan crossed at one time to the south side of the Kwora for the Yoruba country and Borgoo with a large number of cattle. At my request, two European visitors to my encampment estimated the heads of cattle to be crossed at that time, including goats and sheep, to be no less than 3,000, and that only of one caravan. As a proof from other eye-witness than mine alone, the same continues to be to the present time. Umoru, King of Nupe, a subordinate to the Sultans of Gondu and Sokoto, can turn out if required 3,000 horses at any

time ; but with him, unlike the Hauser, they are not used as beasts of burden to carry loads, but merely to ride. Last September, at my visit to him at his capital, Bida, accompanied by a European missionary, Mr. J. H. Ashcroft, the king entertained us most liberally. At our departure he determined to escort us in person to the gate of the city with no less than a retinue of 50 horses and about 500 on foot, to do us honour as his guests, notwithstanding every attempt I made to dissuade him from troubling himself thus on our account. There are butcher stalls at Bida daily.

One remark I may also add, that is, I think it would be useless to attempt for the present, to teach the natives manufacturing of cotton goods, for the purpose of improving upon their own ; that will follow in course of years as a natural sequence ; but first open to them good roads and easy water transit, and then supply them largely with European merchandize, which industry and skill have already manufactured, in exchange for the produce of their soil, to the production of which their attention should be mainly directed ; thus both the manufactures and native produce from the soil will be mutually and amply remunerated.

The introduction of legitimate commerce will prove a silent but a sure death blow in course of time to the existing domestic slavery in the interior countries. To my personal knowledge, since legitimate commerce has been introduced at Lagos, which has very greatly influenced the interior countries, upwards of a thousand slaves have purchased their own liberations, through extra labour and earning, in their allowed time for amusement and rest, from their own farms, or by collecting palm oil, or shea-butter nuts, which they sold, and thus collect enough to purchase their own ransom, and that of any of their relatives in slavery. The settlement of Lagos, to the present time, swarms with hundreds such men as free labourers in the merchants' establishments, as the Kroomen has been, and the Cooleys are now, employed in other countries.

The district along the north side of the Binue, as far as we had come, was known by the name of Igbira, its extent being, from the confluence eastward, about fifty miles. The chief town was Pánda, now destroyed, and to distinguish the country and its people from another tribe which I shall hereafter allude to, it is often styled Igbira-Pánda, Igbira-Ihí, or Igbira-Egú. The country has been represented, but wrongly, as being called Pánda, which is properly confined to the town. The people are highly civilised, friendly,

civil, and most industrious, and with whom it is of much importance to keep on good terms, as a great deal of trade is carried on by their means. A few Muhammadans are to be found among them, but the great majority are Pagans, but with fewer barbarous rites than any other heathen tribe we encountered. Tattooing is not practised, nor have they any distinctive mark. In person they are rather tall, and well-made, with a sub-typical negro countenance, and they generally keep the body well covered with clothes. They use a peculiar language, differing from the Igára, and having mixed affinities, chiefly with Núpe and Yóruba.

The country on both banks of the river is covered with forest. Numerous towns and villages are placed along the banks, sometimes visible and sometimes hidden. Some of the scenery was occasionally varied by the appearance of ranges of hills, while in the various reaches of the noble river numerous wooded islands were passed as we ascended.

Above Ojogo the current ran nearly three knots, the river being for a short distance confined between banks, behind which was finely wooded rising land, where also oil-palms were noted for the last time. Along the river edge, generally partially embedded in the banks, were large, unshapely looking blocks of rock, bearing evident marks of igneous action. A little further on a fine range of hills ran nearly parallel with the river on the north side, one extremity touching the water. Just beyond the current runs very strongly, averaging four knots, and the river takes a northerly bend. The banks on the south side are very high, and along the top, picturesquely placed nearly at the foot of a table-mountain, we could see a village. Behind we discovered another prettily shaped hill.

Dr. Baikie, in his narrative of the expedition, says, "In this beautiful locality, favoured as it seemingly is in situation and in soil, secured by its elevation from the rising of the river, free from swamps, and abounding in healthy situations, not a trace of a human habitation could be seen, nor was there visible the smallest attempt at cultivation. Many hills near this place have a very peculiar aspect, some being quite isolated and rising with steep sides almost suddenly from flat land near the river. Fresh breezes blowing daily up the stream, we got a spare fore-castle awning fitted as a temporary fore-sail, which sensibly affected our progress. Though no towns or villages could be seen to enliven the prospect, yet everything around us wore a smiling aspect. The river, still upwards of a mile in

breadth, preserved its noble appearance, the neighbouring soil teemed with a diversified vegetation, and the frequent recurrence of hill and dale pleased and gratified the eye. Nor was animal life wanting, for from our mast-head we enjoyed the novel sight of a large herd of elephants, upwards of an hundred in number, crossing a little streamlet, not much more than a mile from us."

Near this place we came upon a settlement of Fulatas, on the south bank. The district is named Zhibú, and there are three towns: Gándiko, Gankéra, and Ghibu. This settlement originated in a Fulata expedition sent to attack Wukari, a large town on the south bank, but it failed, so instead of returning to the northern shore they founded these towns, and inter-married with the inhabitants of the district, the Djukus. The languages spoken are principally Púlo and Djúku, but Háusa is also understood by many. About one-half of the people are nominal Muhammadans, the remainder being Pagans.

In these towns the huts are less crowded, and have about them little plots of ground planted with vegetables, being the first signs of horticulture we had met with. On the sides and roofs of the huts were trained pumpkins, gourds, and other cucurbitaceous species, while in their gardens were numerous plants with still unripe fruit. In a little market we found women bartering beer for bundles of corn of different kinds. Hearing that there were horses we asked to see them, and were accordingly shown several fine Arabs, nicely groomed and cared for, and in fine condition. In each stable hung oval-shaped shields, made of elephants' hides, large enough to cover and protect both rider and steed. The possession of horses is one of the distinguishing marks of the Púlo tribes, one too which adds greatly to their power and to the terror of their name. Most of the inhabitants were clad in native-made clothes, but some appeared in garments made of goat-skins, while a few wore still more scanty coverings of green leaves.

Pursuing our course up the river, we come to Zhibù. The town is about a mile from the river, situated on a rising ground, commanding a fine view of the Binue and the country around, and appears to be of greater extent than Idda in Igara, compact and thickly populated. The chief said it would take us eight months to go as far as Hamaruwa, and the river would rise during this month only, and begin to fall the next, and in a little time it would not be deeper than a man's waist, so that our ship being large, would not have

water enough for the voyage downwards. When the chief was asked if a bullock could be purchased, he said they had plenty, but they were with their masters. He was asked who these masters were, but gave an evasive answer ; but we had learnt from the people that they were slaves of the Filanis, or Foulahs, who came from Yola and Hamaruwa.

The kinds of grain grown here are maize, or Indian corn, guinea corn, and the straight-headed grain, called gero, and dawuro ; rice is grown, but in very small quantity, though thousands of bushels of it might be produced yearly on the irrigated banks of this river, which would supply millions of people with wholesome food. In consequence of the men being chiefly occupied in marauding expeditions, the infirm male and female slaves are generally employed in the cultivation of the soil. No yams, plantains, bananas, coco's, oranges, cocoa-nuts, or pine-apples, are to be obtained—these plants not being cultivated. No eatables are hawked about the streets by girls and women, nor are there any places of refreshment, or eating houses under sheds ; in short, there is no market in this country like those met with on the west bank of the Niger. They barter one thing for another, corn for beer, and beer for corn, ground-nuts for rice, &c., but some people took cowries for ivory, to be carried to the Haussa country, where they are current. There is a total absence of palm-trees here, and consequently no palm-oil, and soap is a very scarce article. The people, with very few exceptions, are scantily clothed, ragged and dirty. Clothes are consequently in great request, so that in exchange for fowls, goats, sheep, ducks (of which they possess many), and for mats and corn, they ask cloth.

About forty miles from Zhibù, the Binue, after passing through flat and then undulating country, receives its first affluent, which comes from the north. It then becomes extremely narrow, being hemmed in by rising ground, especially on the right side, for about a quarter of a mile. The depth was not less than five fathoms, and the whole volume of the Binue having to pass this narrow gorge, the current became so rapid, that it was difficult to stem it. After rounding Lynslager Point, we found the river spread its noble stream over as extensive a bed as before.

For some distance the river keeps its breadth, but there is plenty of water, from three to four fathoms. A new range of hills showed itself at a great distance on the left side of the river, consisting of many lofty conical mountains. It lay behind a long ridge of high

lands, running to a considerable distance, almost parallel with the river, which presented a very picturesque appearance. The tops of some of these mountains are covered with luxuriant woods and jungles, and others are quite bare and rocky.

About thirty miles further up the river, we came to the town of Zhiru, on the southern bank, and landed; we found this to be another Fulah settlement, as in Gandiko, the conquering race reducing to slavery the aboriginal inhabitants. These are the Akpoh, or Balni Djukus, who are also met at Fernando Po. The old people retain their primitive costume of a few leaves; the younger having learnt from their conqueror to adopt a more becoming style of clothing.

Pursuing our journey, we anchored off the village of Tshomo, from which the capital town of Hamaruwa is about fourteen miles distant. Hamaruwa is beautifully situated on a hill, rising on the south side of the range of the Muri mountains on the west side of the Binue. It commands a fine and extensive view. The river is seen stretching along like a narrow strip of white cloth, between the shades of light green grass, which fringes the water's edge, and a little further back is the darker green of trees, and then the blue ranges of Fumbina, with the lofty Mauranu mountain in Adamawa, on the left, and the Muri mountain in Hamaruwa, with their many fanciful peaks, on the right side, each at a distance of twelve miles from the river. In the valleys below the town, from one to two hundred beautiful cattle were feeding, and this gave life to the scenery. The houses are round, with conical roofs, built mostly of mud, about twenty or twenty-four feet in diameter. Many of these round houses are built in the premises of each master or head of a family, and enclosed with platted grass or fences, which screen the whole group from the gaze of passers by. A narrow public street runs from one end of the town to the other, fenced in on both sides with grass, with now and then a lane or cross street. Except where the fences had been neglected, the inner yard of a group of huts was not visible from the street. Now and then the front of some premises is open to the street, and the people pass their time there in the heat of the day, under the shade of trees. If the town of Hamaruwa were regularly laid out, according to the plan of a civilized country, it would present a very delightful appearance; but at the time of our visit, many houses had fallen in, and the sites were overgrown with grass; others were planted with guinea corn, while a large portion were only partially fenced in and cultivated. The town, though situated on a hill, with a rocky

substratum, is yet sandy, and thus dries immediately after the fall of the rain ; and though situated at the foot of the Muri range, yet is not so near as to suffer any inconvenience from it. At night there was perfect silence in the town, no singing or drumming was heard, and the absence of light in the houses added to the dead stillness of the night. The inhabitants have no palm-oil, shea butter, nor nut oil for lights, and their sauce is made with cow butter. Cowries are not used, nor any other medium of circulation, but all is done by exchange, as in Zhibù. I had not time enough to inspect their market, but I think it must be very poor, and nothing like those held on the banks of the Kowara, and westward to the sea-coast. They procure water at the foot of the mountains, at a distance of nearly half-an-hour, and it is brought by the women in earthen pitchers, borne on the shoulder, because the mode of dressing their hair, plaited like a ridge, does not allow them to carry loads on their heads ; many, however, who are not so circumstanced as to keep their hair always dressed in that manner, bear burdens on their head. Very few goats and sheep were seen in the town, and no fowls ; perhaps, all these creatures are kept at their farms under the care of their slaves, but from the difficulty of purchasing any for the use of the ship, I think they can possess very few. The difficulty in getting horses to carry us from Hamaruwa to the river side, may, in like manner, be taken as a proof that they do not possess many, or else they did not wish to hire out their war horses for such a journey. Their slaves are chiefly employed in their plantations of Indian and guinea corn ; but there is very little rice, although thousands of bushels of the latter might be cultivated to feed millions of people, the banks of the Binue being particularly adapted for the cultivation of this plant, after the fall of its mighty waters. The Filani themselves being military men, do not make agriculture their chief employment. They are very dirty in their apparel. It would seem that from the time tobes, shirts, trousers, and other garments are put on new, they are never wetted, except it be by rain, till they are worn to rags. With the majority, the tobes and shirts constitute their apparel by day, and their covering by night, and the trousers are often used as bags, in which corn or other things are carried. The females are cleaner in their apparel, and bestow more pains in plaiting their hair, and ornamenting it with flat pieces of brass, and lead, and copper rings, which are fastened on them in a fanciful manner. Large brass, lead, or iron ear-rings are suspended in their ears, and

larger and ponderous rings of the same metals are worn round their arms, wrists, and legs, according to the means of the wearers ; these metals, and some silver come across from the desert to the Bornu and Haussa countries, whence they are purchased from Moorish merchants, and brought to this part of the country, the traders receiving in return slaves and ivory. Many of the rings are manufactured in Kano and Katshina, in the Haussa country, and there are some Kano brass-workers even at Hamaruwa, who are carrying on their trade with much success ; some specimens were bought from them. Traders from Kano and Katshina visit Hamaruwa in large caravans, and sometimes pass onward with other parties to Adamawa, where they purchase slaves and ivory, the former carrying the latter, and both are sold to the Moors in Kano or Bornu. In this way tons of ivory are yearly carried away from the banks of the Binue, and the country is depopulated by the slave-dealing Filanis. Sometimes the ivory and slaves find their way to the west of the Kowara, and thence to the coast. Two routes to Yola from Hamaruwa were given us by Ibrahim ; the one of fourteen stages, of nearly a day's journey each, round the Fumbina mountains, circuitous but safe, being occupied by, or under the influence of the Filanis, and the other very short, of only four days' journey along the left side of the Binue, but dangerous.

Although this period, the latter part of September, was not, as we afterwards found, that of the highest rise of the river, a temporary fall alarmed us, and preparations for a return were made ; but, in the meantime, the bodies of the party had gone up the river in a boat, and had reached a point called Dulti, about thirty miles above Tshomo, and about 420 miles from the confluence.

One object of our expedition had been to enquire for the traveller Dr. Barth, and, though we heard of white men, we did not know that, three years previously, he had crossed the Binue at its junction with the Fáro, not more than seventy miles from the limit of our expedition. It is interesting to remember his description of the noble stream. He says :—“The principal river, the Bénuwé, flowed here from east to west, in a broad and majestic course, through an entirely open country, from which only here and there detached mountains started forth. The banks on our side rose to twenty-five, and in some places to thirty feet, while just opposite to my station, behind a pointed headland of sand, the Fáro rushed forth, appearing, from this point, not much inferior to the principal river, and coming in a fine sweep

from the south-east. The river, where we crossed it, was, at the very least, 800 yards broad, and in its channel generally eleven feet deep, and was liable to rise, under *ordinary* circumstances, at least thirty, or even at times fifty feet higher. The second river, the Fáro, is stated to come from Mount Lábul, about seven days' march to the south. It was at present about 600 yards broad, but generally not exceeding two feet in depth, although almost all my informants had stated to me that the Fáro was the principal river. The current of the Fáro was extremely violent, far more so than that of the Bénuwé, approaching, in my estimation, a rate of about five miles, while I would rate the former at about three and a-half miles an hour; the current of the Fáro plainly indicating that the mountainous region whence it issued was at no great distance."

At this point we leave the River Bénuwé. What is its origin remains at present unknown, but we have sufficient data to guide us to some general conclusions. From its vast volume, its collecting area must be large. From its extraordinary and rapid rise and fall, that collecting area is probably a mountainous region, and from the comparatively slow current, the fall for a very considerable distance above Tépe must be very gradual. The River Welle, discovered by the German traveller Schweinfurth, would seem to answer to these conditions, although he assigns this to the system of the Shary, because no other region could supply the volume of water which that river pours into Lake Tsad. If this is so, the source of the Bénuwé must be sought still more to the south. Now, if the Welle becomes the Shary, which at Lake Tsad has almost exactly the volume and current of the Bénuwé at Tépe, it is not improbable, when we remember the rain-fall of this part of Central Africa, that the course of the Bénuwé is about the same length as that of the Shary and Welle. Then removing its sources sufficiently to the south to allow room for two collecting areas of equal magnitude, we are almost driven to place its sources about 3° south, and in longitude about 25° east, which is not more than 100 miles from Nyanguè, on the River Lualaba. Is it possible that the unknown Lake Sankorra may find one outlet in the Bénuwé? I am strengthened in this belief by the information furnished me by an Arab trader at Eggan, to which I shall presently refer.

It is somewhat remarkable that in the course of a journey of 700 miles, we come in contact with no less than thirteen different languages. Ten of them are apparently of the same family, and bespeak aboriginal

tribes. One, the Mitshi, is apparently aboriginal, but the language is entirely peculiar, while two are languages whose original homes are remote, they have reached the Niger and Binue, the one accompanying Mohammedan conquest, the other in the path of trade.

The people we passed in our ascent of the river are the Oru and Abo in the Delta, the Igara on the left of the Niger, the Kakanda at the confluence of the Kowara and Tshadda, the Igbira, Bassa, Doma, Mitshi, and Djuku, otherwise called Apa, or Akpa, or Baibai, the language of Kororofa, and the Fulah on the Binue.

1. The Oru, or Ijo, or Udso of Koelle are identical with Brass, at the mouth of the Nun, on the coast, otherwise called Itebu or Nempe, by their Ibo neighbours. This language is spoken to the extent of 100 miles from the mouth of the Nun, to the boundary of Abo territory: how far inland towards Benin, on the right, and towards the Ibo country, on the left of the Niger, is yet unknown.

2. The Abo is a dialect of the Ibo language, commencing from about the Benin branch of the Niger, and extending to Asaba (Onia market of Trotter). It comprises a district of about fifty or sixty miles along the banks of the Niger, and is very extensively spoken in its various dialects in the countries inland, on the left bank of the Niger, as far as we could ascertain, from the information we collected, to Cross River, on the back of Old Calabar; the Calabar or Efik and Bonny trade with the Ibo in the interior,—Isuama seems to be the leading or popular dialect of this language.

3. The next country after the Ibo, on the banks of the Niger, is Igarra; the language of Igarra is the same as the Akpotto, and is spoken from Adamuga to the confluence of the Kowara and Tshadda, to the extent of 110 miles on the banks of the Niger. It is also extensively spoken inland on the left bank of the Niger, to the Mitshi country, on the left bank of the Binue—about the longitude of Ojogo.

4. The Kakanda is the next country on the banks of the Niger, and the language is a dialect of Yoruba. This people have been so much driven about, that the limits of their country are very difficult to ascertain; they inhabited the mountains on the right side of the Kowara and border on Nupe: at present they inhabit chiefly the left banks of the Niger, below the confluence, since they were expelled from their mountain holds, by Dasaba, King of Nupe.

5. The next country after the Kakanda is Nupe, now governed by King Umoru, with whom we are on most friendly terms.

6. From the confluence on the right side of the Binue, is the Igbira country, called Koto by the Haussa, and Kotokori by the Yoruba; since their country has been overrun by the Fulah, they have removed to the left side of the river, in the country of Akpotto. Their language is different from Igarra.

7. The next country after Igbira, on the right side of the Binue, is Bassa, whose language appears to be a distant dialect of the Nupe. Their country has also been overrun by the Fulah, and they were obliged to seek refuge in Akpotto land, after the example of their neighbours the Igbira.

8. The next country on the right side of the Binue, is Doma, also called Arago, a tribe of which is called Agatu, inhabiting Akpotto land on the left side of the Binue, to which they had been driven by the Fulah.

9. The next country on the left side of the Binue, is the Mitshi, whose language is very little known and very peculiar to itself. The Mitshi country commences as it appears opposite Ojogo, and is mixed with the Akpotto and with Kororofa, from which it is difficult to distinguish the boundaries. They are chiefly independent, but some portion of them pay tribute to Wukari, King of Kororofa.

10. The next country after the Mitshi, is extensive,—Kororofa having Wukari for its capital, and the language spoken is Djuku, commonly called Akpa, but they call themselves Baibai. The language is spoken as far as Hamaruwa, now under the government of Mohamma, the Fulah Sultan of that country.

11. The next language we met with on the Binue, is the Fulah.

12. The most important of all is the Haussa, the commercial language of Central Africa.

With regard to the Hausa language, from the prefatory remarks to Schön's Hausa vocabulary we learn that the territory in which the Hausa is the vernacular language may with some limitation be said to be the Soudan. A glance at the map in Dr. Barth's most instructive Travels will show that the territory in which the Hausa is the vernacular language is of considerable extent, probably greater than that occupied by any other language in Central Africa. It is, moreover, not only in those parts that this language is known and understood, and serving as the medium of communication: it has, from various causes, such as the dispersion of Hausas among other nations, through the slave-trade, the commercial pursuits of the natives of the Soudan, and the beauty of the language itself, become,

as it were, to Africa, what the French is to Europe. Sierra Leone contains many of every province of Hausa. Near Cape Coast a little village was pointed out to me inhabited by Hausas, and I have met some at the island of Fernando-Po. At Cape Coast, Lander engaged his faithful Paskoe, the Hausa interpreter, with whom he commenced his travels at Badagry; and there is every reason to conclude that the Hausa language has been the only medium of communication and intercourse with people, chiefs, and kings, from Badagry to Borgou, Rabba, Boosa, Yaouri, Egga, and down the Niger to the Ibo country. No native words are found in Lander's three interesting volumes except such as are Hausa, and the author himself very frequently refers to the extent of the Hausa language. "It is understood," he says, "by the generality of the natives of Borgou, both young and old, almost as well as their mother tongue, and it is spoken by the majority of them with considerable fluency." At Gunga only it was that *even* the Hausa language was not understood. I can corroborate the above statement from my own experience and observation in the River Niger as far as Eggan.

Leaving the west, and passing to the north, it has there also spread far and wide, and obtained the same notoriety as in the west, every traveller bearing testimony to this fact. Clapperton's incidental allusions to the importance of the Hausa language are numerous. Oberweg congratulates the Expedition in having met with an interpreter who was master of Afnu, that is, the Hausa language. Barth, writing to Professor Lepsius from Ai-Salah, speaks of the absolute necessity of mastering the Hausa language, and of his inability on that account to pay much attention to the Tuareg, observing that it was the less to be regretted, since all Asbenawas spoke the Hausa, and used it even more generally than the Targia.

As to the countries along the Niger and Binue, I found that from the confluence to Hamaruwa, a distance of *three hundred miles*, the Hausa was understood, and of immense service to the Expedition.

At Oru, in the Delta, we already commenced meeting with solitary opportunities of communicating with the people through Hausa slaves. From Abo we engaged a Hausa interpreter, who was very serviceable to us throughout the Expedition. At Idda we found that the Hausa language was becoming more generally spoken by the inhabitants: salutations in that language generally sounded in our ears. At Igbegbe, near the confluence, the Hausa is one of the prevailing languages spoken by the mixed population of that market

town, and it is the chief medium of communication in commercial transactions, though Igbira is the language of the place.

At Yimaha in the Igbira country, at Oruku in the Bassa country, at Doma, also among the hitherto unknown Mitshis, among the inhabitants of the extensive Kororofo, and with the Fulanis of Hamaruwa, the Hausa language was the chief medium of communication, both with the chiefs and with the people whom we visited during the late Expedition ; and I was told that the knowledge of Hausa will bring any one to Mecca.

All the Mohammedans understand and speak the Hausa language, and through it the Koran is explained and interpreted in their own mosques throughout Yoruba ; so that from Lagos, Badagry, and Porto Novo, and upwards to the Niger, where Mohammedans are found, the Hausa language is spoken by them. Now, if we glance at the map, it will at once be seen to what extent the language is spoken, and how generally useful a knowledge of it is likely to be.

The other important language of this part of Africa, is the Fulah or Pulo, or Filani, a remarkable people who are found at Timbo and Falaba, on the west coast and have pushed their conquests as far as Yola, to the south of the Binue. Those of the natives who reside in the colony of Sierra Leone, call themselves Fula-men, and their language the Fulah Language. The proper and indigenous name for the Fulahs, as we have called them, is Pulo, in plural Fulbe. Dr. Barth was told by the natives of the interior of the existence, in bygone days, of an ancient kingdom of Ghanata, with a central town, Kazaka. The name of the nation must have been Azer. At a primitive period of their history they were led to leave their paternal abodes to find a more congenial homestead in the fertile plains that form the rich water-shed between the upper course of the river Jaliba and the Maio Balleo, in the west. It would appear that their wanderings towards the west had taken place about the sixteenth century. We now find a strong Pulo empire in a north-westerly direction, from the upper course of the Jaliba, with a government town of Hamd-Allah. This court, with the numerous war-men at its command, is called by the rulers and people of the principality of Futa Jallo and Toro Hubube. But the larger stream of this inland emigration must have spread higher up ; thus the extent of land, now occupied by the western Fulbe, between the young Niger on the one hand, and the Senegal on the other, is called, by the territorial names of Futa Jallo and Futa Toro, with the seat of government at Timbo. These regions

the emigrated Fulbe appear to have regarded as the land marks to their western progress, and, although after their conversion to Islam, they conquered many more countries in obedience to the dictates of their newly embraced religion, they maintain their domiciles within these confines to the present day.

In the course of time when, by the zeal of the ruling *wālis*, the doctrine of the Prophet had become the national creed of Futa land, the Fulbe, in obedience to the dictates of Alquoran, and emboldened by the increase of numerical strength, agreed upon a Holy war, for the coercion of their heathenish, and as yet unbelieving, neighbours and fellow-countrymen. An opportunity soon presented itself at a heathenish feast and dance, when one of the Moslem priests tore up the drum of an unbeliever, and the offence thus given to the idolaters was received as an uncalled for provocation. An endeavour on the part of the heathenish populace to resent the outrage committed on their hereditary practices, was eagerly seized upon by the fanatic Fulbe, who regarded this incident as the propitious moment for entering upon the Jihade, or Holy war against the unbelievers. Thus a crusade began, which extended to the neighbouring tribes, when a number of nationalities, one after the other, were forced to accept the crescent in exchange for their hereditary and traditional superstitions. The Fulbe, hitherto ruled by Alfas and priests, resolved then to choose a king to take the supreme command of their armed hosts in their frequent warfare, because after the Moslem tradition the wars of the faithful with unbelievers to the intent of their conversion, is unlawful without a king or supreme head. The royal dignity was then, by a plebiscitum, conferred upon the Alfa of Timbo, an official person who unites the office of magistrate with the authority of a high priest. From henceforth this dignitary assumed the two-fold authority of Imam and king, and possessed the prerogatives of watching over the interests of the faithful in spiritual matters, and of taking the leadership in their politics. The first attempt of the Fulbe to suppress heathenism became successful, and with the introduction of the doctrine of the Prophet, also the political supremacy of the Futa dynasty over the surrounding territories, became established and finally acknowledged. Gradually the warlike spirit of this gifted nation led them to greater success among many contiguous nationalities; their influence is great and their name respected on the banks of the Senegal, the Rio Pongas, the Nunez, the Scarcies; they influence the trade far into the interior, at Segou,

Buria, Sangara, the so-called gold countries ; their importance is felt among the Bambaras and Mandingoes ; in the Suleiman, Limba and Koranko countries, and has paved itself open roads and easy ways through the Susus to the Mellacoure, and they have obtained welcome passes through the Timane and Sherbro countries to the British settlement of Sierra Leone. As enterprising traders, they convey the gold dust and ivory, obtained from the distant Serankules, to the French colonists of the Senegal and to the stores of the European and mercantile population of Freetown, in Sierra Leone. The Fulbe in their further conquests seem to have been satisfied with the establishment of their imported religion and the expulsion of heathenism, and then after receiving guarantees for the acceptance of their Protectorate, to have withdrawn their numerous armies to the confines of their fertile homes of Futa Jallo and Toro.

Anything like even a vague estimate as to the numerical strength of the Pulo nation we have at no time been able to obtain, since we never met with any African traveller far and long enough to undertake a reliable estimation. Suffice it to say that this interesting nation occupies a territory, both irregular and widespread, towards the interior ; according to Dr. Barth, there is a considerable part of them in Adamawa ; they are in power at Sokoto, and there is ample proof of their being largely mixed with the Hausa nation.

Ever since the times of Denham and Clapperton, the warlike Fulahs or Filani have continued their hostile and predatory attacks on the more peaceful tribes—towns are still destroyed, and it is their frequent attacks which unsettle the tribes, and render them suspicious of the presence of strangers.

I now beg to offer a few remarks on the trade routes which meet at Eggan, on the Niger. The chief routes are those which come from the north, from Tripoli, across the Sahara, bringing European produce on camels as far as Kano, and thence by donkeys to the Nupe Kingdom, whence the goods are dispersed into the adjoining countries. Another route comes from the far East, apparently from the countries on the Upper Nile. With one of these caravans we saw two camels which bore the English broad arrow, and we understood they had been used in the Abyssinian Expedition. Other caravans trade to the south-east. When I was in Eggan in 1872, I met a Haussa trader, who told me he had seen an old white man in a canoe on a lake ; that he saluted him ; and the white man had come to him and asked him why he saluted him. He described the

white man as wearing white whiskers and having a red shirt and overall boots. I did not at the time gather from him how long before that it was that he had seen the white man, but I found last year that the journey must have occupied nearly two years, so that it may have been in 1869 or 1870 that he saw the traveller. Thinking it might possibly be the traveller Livingstone, I gave the trader a letter with instructions to deliver it and bring me back the reply. I never heard again of the man until last September ; when I was at Eggan, I found that the man had returned. My son saw him, and on asking about the letter, he told him that he had been to the same place, and there he had been told the white man was dead, so he brought back the letter. My son asked him some questions ; among others, what was the name of the water where he had seen the traveller, and the answer was, Tanganyika. The people at the side of the lake he described as very wild and fierce. The route taken seemed to be on the northern and western shore ; then, turning southwards, was along the bank of the Binue, and no large river or mountain chain seems to have been crossed. If this is so, it would seem that the Binue turns to the south-east, running parallel to the upper course of the Bahi Kuta, or Welle.

In conclusion, I would remark that so good is the feeling towards the English among the rulers, to the north of the Binue, that there is every opportunity for the introduction to a larger extent of British commerce ; and though the Government have not continued the Niger expeditions, and have withdrawn the Consular authority from the Conference, the fruit of the former policy is now being found.

Further attempts carefully planned, and entrusted to men who would conciliate and not alarm the natives, would carry geographical discovery far to the interior, while the labours of Messrs. Schon and Reichardt, in reducing the Hausa and Fulah languages, have rendered most important assistance to the future traveller in these regions.

Missionary Operations

IN

THE NIGER TERRITORY.



The Niger Native Bishopric Fund, having been replenished in 1873 by kind Christian friends who had so liberally contributed to it, I feel it my duty to give them a condensed report showing how it has been expended in aiding to extend our stations in the Niger Mission. I must here thankfully state that the salaries of the Native Agents, Ordained and Lay, employed in working the stations at Bonny, Brass, and Akassa, previously established and supported through the means of the Bishopric Fund, have been, by the special request of the Donor, paid from the Walter Jones Fund. Being thus relieved, the Niger Native Bishopric Fund has been employed in taking up new stations, and, with the aid of local contributions, has enlarged several places of worship in the Mission, and secured them from destruction by covering them with galvanized iron roofing sheets in place of frail and combustible grass thatch, liable to be burnt down at any time, either by incendiary or accidental fire.

New Calabar Mission.—The first place of extension was the New Calabar Mission, got up at the invitation of the king and chiefs, where a Boarding School-house capable of holding 70 children has been put up, a Mission House for the Native Minister, and a cottage for the Catechist, all of boards and covered with incombustible galvanized iron roofing sheets.

According to the plan pursued in Bonny and Brass, I got the king and chiefs to grant £200 towards the buildings in the Mission, which is being paid in Palm Oil. There are 35 boys, boarders at School, towards the support of whom the parents and guardians have

paid, in Palm Oil and trade goods, the amount of £132. At present the Boarding room is used to hold religious services in, till a preaching place is built. This station forms another centre from which the surrounding villages are visited to hold religious intercourse with the people in New Calabar River district.

Brass Mission.—The Church of the Brass Mission being too small for the congregation, it was lengthened by 30 feet, which now makes room for upwards of 400 people; it is even now filled on Sundays when the people are at home from the markets. To accomplish this work the Native chiefs and converts contributed in building materials and money to the amount of £250, and the European Supercargoes in the River to about £50, to aid the Fund. This Church, St. Barnabas, is now covered with galvanized iron roofing sheets, safe from fire, and neatly painted.

Besides other converted chiefs, towards the end of the year 1876 Ockiya, the king of Brass, publicly renounced idolatry, and became an adherent to Christianity. To prove to his people his earnestness, and the helplessness of the idols, he delivered up his three large household gods to Mr. Johnson, the minister. The three images are to be seen in this country, as trophies of the triumph of the Gospel, which is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth.

Bonny Mission.—Before proceeding further it is due to acknowledge the Christian liberal interest manifested by the gentlemen Supercargoes of Bonny River, which is of no ordinary kind among merchants on the West Coast of Africa. In order to give opportunity to the shipping and all connected with it to attend Divine worship on the Lord's Day, they voluntarily contributed money and materials, and built a small Church, St. Clement's, which cost about £350, in which those who feel inclined, both Europeans and Natives, now assemble to attend Divine service on the morning of the Lord's Day: this is a noble example set by Christian merchants before heathen chiefs. Such Christian acts, combined with commerce wherever it is established, give it power to become a civilizer of the world.

This was not all. A few months ago it was proposed by these gentlemen, and there and then agreed upon, to build a School-room in connection with St. Clement's Church, and a cottage for a resident schoolmaster, for the benefit of their pantry boys, coopers, and carpenters in their employ, in which they may occupy their time more profitably when at leisure, instead of roving about the town, by

improving their minds in reading and writing, and thus be kept from mischief; to this object they most readily voted £120, and building materials. These are some of the results of the Niger Native Bishopric Fund.

To proceed. The present openings on the coast having been thus secured and generously supported, the application of the Fund is transferred to the Upper Niger, where the people are very poor, not having the means to contribute as those in Oil Rivers. In these upper stations, two places of worship have been enlarged at Lokoja. The Onitsha capacious Church has been secured from accidental fire by being covered with galvanized iron roofing sheets. Four other School Chapels are being put up, one at each new station, Osamare, Alenso, Asaba in Onitsha district, and the fourth at Kipo Hill, the last of our stations, 350 miles from the coast. We are also invited to re-occupy Gbebe.

The following facts will illustrate the friendly disposition of kings and chiefs with whom I have come in contact, and the openings that seem to exist for extension on the Upper Niger.

When the S.S. Victoria stranded on the Niger in 1871, King Masaba, of Bida, in Nupe, out of gratitude to, and respect for, Her Majesty's Government, for its yearly friendly intercourse with him, through Commissioners, very kindly and voluntarily aided our getting down to the coast by the overland route, a distance of about 250 miles across from the bank of the Niger, by presenting the travelling party with twelve horses, and carriage of packages free, to the limits of his territory, because we were the subjects of his great friend, the English Government.

His successor, King Umoru, is not less friendly disposed: though a Mohammedan monarch, yet he has given me permission to establish a Mission Station in the neighbourhood of his trading capital, Egga, the limit of the Great Expedition commanded by the late Captain Trotter, R.N., in 1841; and has also contributed 100 palmyra scantlings towards the buildings of the Mission station, on Kipo Hill slope, above alluded to.

At this place we come in frequent intercourse with the Hausa ivory traders from south eastward countries. One of these ivory merchants informed us at Egga, about four years ago, that he had seen an old white man in that direction, with long white beard, that he wore a red shirt, and long boots, and peaked cap; that he was paddled about a sheet of water by a savage tribe who bedaubed

themselves with palm oil, &c. Supposing the person seen might be in all probability the great traveller, the late Dr. Livingstone, I wrote a note at Egga, which I entrusted to the ivory merchant to deliver to the white man or any other he might again meet with. But last year, the merchant sent back the letter by his son, and expressed regret that on his arrival at the country, he was informed that the white man was dead. Whoever it might be, the trial to communicate was worth making.

The Tshadda branch of the Niger was explored by the late Dr. Baikie in 1854. I myself reached Hamarua, a distance of about 300 miles from Lokoja, the confluence of the two rivers Kwora and Tshadda; the chiefs on the banks of which were very anxious to have intercourse with civilized nations; some of them have sent messages to me to open Mission stations among them. The navigable limits of this branch Tshadda or Binue, and its tributary stream Faro, from south eastward, have not yet been reached.

With these objects in view, I believe the time is now come to make efforts to secure the openings before us, and take advantage of the present friendly disposition of the chiefs and people toward us, who are inviting us to visit their towns and villages, and put Mission stations among them.

In order, however, to work the whole Mission more efficiently, as well as to extend it beyond our present limits, it has become absolutely necessary to place under our control the use of a small steamer of very light draft.

This will enable us to halt during the visitation at every station, and spend as much time as may be found necessary to examine and organize the working of the same, and then leisurely proceed from one station to another, without being obliged, as we now are, to stay longer than necessary at one station, and hurry past others, as we are now compelled to do, being dependent for passage on the trading steamers.

It will also enable us to visit and open intercourse with tribes beyond our present stations on both branches of the river, the Kwora and the Binue, better known as the Tshadda branch of the Niger. This cannot be done by depending upon trading steamers, which move up and down the River on their own business, landing cargoes at the trading stations, and conveying produce to the coast, without stopping at intermediate stations, during the time the River is workable for large steamers.

A small steamboat is very necessary for protection in moving up and down the river, because some wild and savage natives have taken advantage of open boats, which they have attacked and plundered, and kept the crews as prisoners to be ransomed by enormous sums of money.

With these openings before the Church, and with the Mission stations at Lokoja, at the Confluence, and Kipo Hill, opposite Egga, fresh starting points inland, is it chimerical to say, we, from the West, might, in God's good providence, in due time, shake hands midway with our Missionary brethren, who are even now advancing from the East?

To carry out these objects the Fund will need to be liberally replenished. God has graciously permitted it to be the means of accomplishing great results on the coast. Let us hope that He will materially aid us to make further progress among the Natives of the interior countries.

S. A. CROWTHER,

BISHOP, NIGER TERRITORY.



Contributions to the Niger Native Bishopric Fund, for the purpose of carrying on the work of the Stations supported by the Fund, or to the Niger Steamer Fund, towards the purchase of a suitable vessel for visiting the Stations on the river, will be thankfully received at the CHURCH MISSIONARY HOUSE, 16, Salisbury Square, Fleet Street, London.

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